

Assessing Roadside Vegetation Management Alternatives
Project Management Meeting
December 7, 2004

December Action Items

Item #	Action	Due Date
1.	Kristina will bring the completed Literature reviews	Jan 20
2.	Kristina will bring the 1 st draft of their proposed Decision Framework for the group to review (2 nd draft – Feb)	Jan 20
3.	Kristina will also bring the final interview reviews	Jan 20
4.	Ray will give an update on the VE Study proposal	Jan 20
5.	Discussion on meeting every other month	Jan 20
6.	Next meeting – in Boardroom	*New date* January 20

Present: Lane McCallister Stan Suchan
 Bob Berger Jack Taylor
 John Andrews Jacob Millard
 Heather Hansen Ray Willard
 Roy Scalf Pat Moylan
 Angela Storey Neal Wolbert
 Kristina Hill Sandy Wolbert
 Mark Wahl (by phone)

Members
Absent: Jay Davis Josey Paul
 Karl Arne Lee Dorigan
 Keith Anderson
 Dave McCormick

Pat started off the meeting with some news items:

-Chris Christopher's e-mail to the WSDOT's top management regarding the continued development of IRVM(Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management) plans. Some of the highlights were:

- Herbicide use will be down 27% statewide. Most of the reduction is due to the elimination of diuron use in Western Washington and decreased use of diuron in Eastern Washington.
- IRVM Plans were fully implemented this past year. Whidbey Island being one of them. Highlights from the Whidbey Island plan mentioned:
 - 1) Zone 1 herbicide applications were eliminated for all sections with curb. We will still maintain Zone 1 around guardrails.
 - 2) There was more mowing and manual pulling of conifers.
 - 3) A new technique was tested for controlling Japanese knotweed with an herbicide (Roundup) injection.

- 4) Restoration of native vegetation on a 1.5 acre cut slope. We will be monitoring this area for the next couple of years.
- 5) Study of compost tea is still being considered for future planting projects.
- Jerry Benson of BFI Natives has been brought on as an on call private consultant for vegetation management in Eastern Washington.
- Draft IRVM plans are now being finalized for 2005 implementation. There are plans being developed in 8 maintenance areas: Mt. Vernon, Everett, Port Orchard, Tacoma, Okanogan, Walla Walla, Wenatchee and Ephrata.
- Six test plots for establishing competitive grass stands have been completed in three Maintenance areas in Eastern Washington equal approximately 26 acres. The plots are located on: I-90/I-82 interchange, SR 155, SR 221, SR 22, I-90 and I-182.

Ray said they are looking at area by area trends at the end of the year. Because of the reduction in the use of diuron, there's been an explosion of nuisance weeds in many areas.

Follow up on November's action items:

Value Engineering – Ray talked about some of the recommendations that came out of the VE Study for upcoming projects on Whidbey Island:

1. Establish grass to edge of roadway
2. Place permeable mats under all guardrail in project limits
3. More aggressive weed control during the contract (with Maintenance help)
4. Delineate native vegetation areas to preserve/protect from construction work
5. Working on establishing item cost to each project.

Ray said the VE Study draft is in it's final editing and they hope to be done by the end of the year or early January.

Toxicology report – Angela said Erica Schreder sent her final comments and she would relay a message to DOT within a week or so.

Meeting dates – It was decided that the monthly meetings will be on the 3rd Thursday for the next 4 remaining meetings. The time will be 11:30 am to 2:30 pm. The room schedule is as follows:

Jan. 20 – Boardroom (start time: noon)	Feb. 17 – Conference Room 2A
March 17 – Boardroom	April 21 – Conference Room 2A

There will be a discussion at the January meeting to see if we should meet every other month instead.

Thurston County: Lane McCallister gave a powerpoint presentation on Thurston County's roadside practices. He began with county roads department in 1986 and was with the Thurston County Noxious Weed Board before that. He gave a brief history of their vegetation program. Changes started in the early 80's when citizens were raising concerns regarding pesticides and herbicides. An advisory board was formed in 1987

and in 1989, there was an adoption of a Pesticide Use policy. A couple of rules were that no broadcast techniques were to be used and no pesticide use in sensitive areas. In 1993 a new policy emerged that said each department had their own IVM. It also said that you could use herbicides in a sensitive areas with a prescription (when to treat, what to treat it with and used strictly for noxious weed control only). This is reviewed by the County Board of Health. Lane gave an overview of their personnel and equipment. He showed some of their problem areas like school bus stops and line of sight areas. Their mowing schedule is twice a year for arterials and once a year for local roads. They have about 2000 lane miles. It cost about \$140 per acre (does not include traffic control) which comes out to about \$70 a mile. They do clearing of guardrails about 2 or 3 times a year and they have about 12 miles of guardrail. They also do a lot of stormwater maintenance (works together with the other counties and the City of Olympia). Their vegetation program runs just under a million a year. They are strictly mechanical. They target roads that are scheduled to be resurfaced that year and include the shoulder pulling at the same time. It runs about \$1000 a day in cost (that includes the dumping of the material in one of their dumpsites). For erosion they either lay straw down or put jute matting after they clear the area. The EPA is already testing for metals and petroleum products in their vector waste.

They also have what they call "owner maintained" program. Basically these are properties that the owners want to do the maintenance. There's about 20-25 people on the program and are mainly citizens in developments. There are some safety issues. The program is slowly declining.

In regards to wildlife habitat and vegetation management, their attitude is if it's not in the way, they leave it alone. They assign people to the same routes so that the mowing operators get to know the area well with it's animal and plantlife. They do have a problem with deer in their area. Jack Taylor mentioned that on Whidbey Island, they have about 70-100 deer incidents a year. With arterials and collectors, they try to mow all the way to the right of way line. There doesn't seem to be any visible damage to the pavement from the vegetation moving in. They just mow Scotch Broom down. It's more of a nuisance weed rather than noxious.

Project Status:

-Interviews - Jacob gave a handout to everyone showing who he has talked with so far. He went through the list, which included a number of other states. Some interesting examples of information collect through the interviews so far include: Maine is looking at using aggressive vegetation to stop evasive species. The National Park Service has been experimenting with hot foam. They're still trying to figure out the machine. It's a 2-3 hundred gallon tank and runs about \$800 a gallon. The foam is made from a sugar solution. One of the shortcomings is they always need to be close to a water source. Jacob said that there were a lot of "I don't knows" or "maybes" in these interviews. In Iowa, they're letting plants grow to the edge for a while before mowing. Lots of their shoulders are paved. Ray asked how are these interviews going to be written up? Kristina said reported information will focus on the ponding and pavement issues.

-Literature Reviews – Kristina handed out the updated draft of the Literature Review. She pointed out how most of the documents reviewed are either from trade publications or government documents.

No one has done much systematic study on vegetation management. Even CALTRANS has a lot of maybes. Very little has been tested systematically. At our next meeting in January, Kristina will be proposing a draft decision framework to the group.

So the next steps will include:

- Complete the Literature reviews
- 1st draft of a decision framework presented at the January meeting (2nd draft will be in February)
- Final interview reviews
- Discussion on how to do the field reviews.

Next meeting will be held on Thursday, January 20, 2005 at 12:00 – 3:00 pm at the Dayton building in the Boardroom.